Center for Legislative Archives

Station 1, Document 1

The Wattion of the Warriers of the Unper & Low Sandy hier; To the Hondet the Congress of the United States of America. Fathers Listen. Last Ruguft. had a Petetion drain, and sent to Father the Projection of the U.S. to retinguist the one half of the Reprise at the foot of the doguils at Lover Sandigky, and to five the other half to the Miles on ony who should be sent to five with us Mathen Liften, The Wornions have non taken to pon mother to rener the Patilion sent by the Chief. The Wearnin and the Women new crigi to the Station of the United States; We beg of Congress to do us the great favour we now ask for- We the Wormion and Women now speak with one voice to the Seventien States - Fathen, we now beg of you that you will relin quifh to us, the whole of the Referve in this place. Our neaform for asking this great 1.

Transcript (excerpt):

Fathers Listen,

Last August (a year) our Chiefs had a Petition drawn and sent to our Great Father the President of the U.S. to relinquish the one half of the Reserve at the foot of the Rapids at Lower Sandusky, and to give the other half to the Missionary who should be sent to live with us.

Fathers, Listen. The Warriors have now taken it upon themselves to renew the petition sent by the Chiefs. The Warriors and the Women now cry to the Fathers of the United States. We beg of Congress to do us the great favour we now ask for. We the Warriors and Women now speak with one voice to the Seventeen States—Father, we now beg of you that you will relinquish to us, the whole of the Reserve in this place.

Our reasons for asking this great favour of our Fathers are these—It is the place where we were born, where our ancestors were born; and where they, and many of our relations lie buried—It is our most ardent wish, to live the remainder of our days in this place; and to have our Graves here with our ancestors and Relations.

Another Reason of our asking our Fathers to give us this little piece of land is this. We are desirous to have the Gospel preached to us, and to have our children learn to read; and we want to cultivate our land with the plow; and raise Cattle, and have a Mill to grind our corn. In order to enjoy these privileges, we must build houses and fence fields: But we are afraid to build houses or to make farms and fields—for our Fathers may order this land to be sold to their white Children, and then we must immediately leave all we have done, and be made poor at once; ... which will be very hard for us as we have numbers of very Old people, and...Children. ...



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 1, Document 1

Document Information:

Petition of the Warriors Situated on the Upper and Lower Sanduskies Begging the Government to Relinquish the Land to Them. December 22, 1806. NAID 306672 (excerpt)

Description:

This example features excerpts from pages 1 and 3 of a petition from a Native American tribe located in today's Ohio. The petition was written in 1806, showing that the expansion of White settlement was then pushing Native Americans from this region, and the Native Americans hoped that Congress would help them resist dispossession. Three distinctive features of the petition are that the language of the petition suggests that men and women each had a separate but important status in the tribal society; that the tribe wished to have access to religious and educational resources; and that the individual petitioners signed their names with distinctive symbols. The urgency of the petition's appeal shows the pressure on the tribe. Their ancestral lands were being taken, and they looked with dread to a future cut off from the cultural landmarks of their society. One can see the tribe looking toward the future with hope for their children's education and looking back with reverence for their history. Would Congress help?



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 1, Document 2

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Transcript (excerpt)

Whereas the citizens of the Districts of Aquohee & Taquoee in the Cherokee nation, are informed that on the 21st of Decr. 1835, certain individual Cherokees; assembled at New Echota and, without any authority from the council or people of the Nation entered into an agreement with the Revd. Mr. Schemerhorn under the name of a treaty, by the provisions of which all the land of the Cherokees are ceded; their Government and Laws abolished, their private improvements: the property of individuals: alienated from their rightful owners, without their consent: And all their rights, as free men, wrested from them, and left to the discretionary disposal of strangers.

And Whereas: we are further informed that this compact is to be presented to the senate of the United States for ratification, as a treaty... we again humbly solicit their attention to the following points on account of which we so urgently deprecate the ratification of said instrument. viz, the persons who are represented as acting on behalf of the Cherokees, in this matter, are wholly unauthorized. And the circumstances of a few individuals making a treaty, vitally affecting the liberties, the property and personal rights of a whole people, appears to us so utterly repugnant to reason and justice and every dictate of humanity, that we come to the Senate of the United States with full confidence that under such circumstances the voice of weakness itself will be heard in its cry for Justice...



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 1, Document 2

Document Information:

Cherokee Petition in Protest of the New Echota Treaty, 1836 NAID 2127291 (excerpt)

Description:

The Cherokee were a powerful tribe that controlled a vast region in the Southeastern United States. The expansion of White settlement into their land in the decades before and after the War of 1812 eroded their territory, however, and the discovery of gold on their land in Georgia made the situation worse. The Cherokee stood by their treaty rights in the face of attempts by the state of Georgia to appropriate their land. The federal government signaled its abandonment of supporting their treaty rights by enacting the Indian Removal Act of 1830. This petition was written to protest a devious action through which members of the tribe—who had no authority to act for the tribe—signed a treaty giving the tribal lands to a White missionary. Would the Senate of the United States let such an underhanded deed prevail? This petition reflects the Cherokee sense of their tribe as a nation within the United States. Its language reflects the high educational level of many leading members of the tribe, and its signature page shows the names of the petitioners in the Cherokee written language. Although President Andrew Jackson dismissed Native Americans as primitive savages in his 1829 Annual Message to Congress, this petition showed the House and Senate that the tribe was an advanced society with a strong claim for justice. Despite this petition and other efforts to persuade the government to respect their rights, many members of the tribe were forcibly removed by the U.S. military from most tribal lands in 1836, a process remembered as the Trail of Tears.



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 1, Document 3

national powers, and implore them to succor the weak & unfortunate.--In despite of the undoubted natural right, which the of the nation for their the of on the deference shown by all ranks and classes of men, in this country, to our sex, forms a striking contrast; and as an honorable to compel them to seek To you then, as the constitutional protectors of the Indians within our terwe solemnly and earnestly appeal 11 is this general kindness lightly regarded or coldly appreciated, but with warm feelings of affectionate pride, and hearts swelling, with the free institutions, have committed of government to those whom nature and reason declare the best fitted to exercise them; and your memorialists their own sex, with the ordinary political affairs of presume to direct general conduct, or control the acts of those who stand in the near and guardian relations of husbands and brothers, yet as well as to cheer or to console. generous and refined THAT your memorialists are deeply impressed with the belief that the present crisis in the affairs of the Indian nations. to bestow OF THE UNDERSIGNED national virtues as they are the depositories And if we approach the public representatives of our husbands and brothers, only in the humble character of suppliants we, the feeblest of more than fifty thousand of our fellow christians; Nor much injured people from annihilation, to shield our country from the curses denounced honorable body, the cause of mercy and humanity, may we not hope that even the small voice of female sympathy will be heard? and distinguishing trait in the American character, has often excited the admiration of intelligent foreigners. gratitude, the mothers and daughters of America bear testimony to the generous nature of their countrymen. Even in private life we may not THE MEMORIAL Compared with the estimate placed on Woman, and the attention paid to her in other nations, the secure possession of those lands, it is intended, we are told, to force them from their native soil, and When, therefore, injury and oppression threaten to crush a hapless people within our borders, pledging the faith ece Vour ritory and as the peculiar guardians of our national character, and our country's welfure, persuade. of humanity, to solicit with earnestness, It is readily acknowledged, that the wise and venerated founders of our country's UNITED STATES. mmediate consideration, demanded by its interesting nature and pressing libportance. to shelter the American character from lasting dishonor Indians have, to the land of their forefathers, and in the face of solemn treaties, man all admit that there are times when duty and affection call on us to advise and eeble, appeal with confidence to those who should be the representatives of would sincerely deprecate any presumptuous interference on the part of he country, as wholly unbecoming the character of American Females. MEMORIAL. THE auco on this subject, involving as it does the prosperity and happiness of 10 THE HONORABLE THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 100 new homes in a distant and dreary wilderness. for the woes RESIDENTS OF THE STATE OF REMININARY, your petiticners will ever pray feel calls loudly on all who can and save this remnant of a Respectfully Sheweth: and ungrateful, powers And cruel he he 0 Lo

Center for Legislative Archives

Station 1. Document 3

Document Information:

Memorial from the Ladies of Steubenville, Ohio, Protesting Indian Removal, February 15, 1830. National Archives Identifier: 306633

Description:

In 1830, women began joining in the emerging grassroots democracy by organizing themselves, as groups of petitioners, within communities and across regions of the country. This document is one of the earliest surviving examples of a petition from women advocating for a political issue. In his 1829 Annual Message to Congress, President Andrew Jackson called for removing Native American tribes from the Southeastern United States, and this petition was sent to Congress just two months after his address. The women identified themselves as residents of Steubenville, Ohio. They appealed to Congress to consider Indian removal as a moral issue. They argued that, as a morally elevated, honorable body, Congress should show compassion for the suffering of the tribes and respond on that basis. Note, from the crossed-out word, that the petition was printed for the use of women living in Pennsylvania, and that it was passed on to this group in an adjacent state. This suggests that the petition was not merely a local expression of opinion, but that it was created as part of a larger movement.



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 2, Document 4

in the State of New York, believing that SLAVERY as it exists in America, is a hainous sin against God, and a flagrant violation of the rights of man, inconsistent with Christianity, with our national Declaration of Independence, and with our Republican Institutions, impeding the march of liberal principles abroad; and detrimental to the interests and subversive of the liberties of the laboring population of our republic, at home; a reproach to us in the eyes of the world, and a national crime, exposing us to the judgments of Heaven, a fruitful source of sectional jealousy, perpetually tending to discord and disunion; a constant and increasing source of danger, which threatens every hour to involve us in a contest in which the Almighty has no attributes which could take sides with us,'-Do solemnly and importunately petition and implore your Honorable bodies, to take all measures within the scope of your constitutional powers, for the abatement and removal of this great evil,-By immediately abolishing Slavery and the Slave Trade in the District of Columbia and Territories subject to the jurisdiction of Congress, by prohibiting the internal and coasting Slave Trade between the several States, and by taking effectual measures to prevent the exportation of Slaves from the United States and its territories to Texas, or the dominions of any foreign power. United States : To the Hon., the House of Representatives, ! Senate of the We, the undersigned, citizens of und



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 2, Document 4

Document Information:

Petition of the Henry S. Clark and 57 Members of Hamilton College, in the State of New York, against Slavery, September 27, 1837. NAID 23914179

Description:

This 1837 petition from students at Hamilton College in New York was a bold assertion of sentiment that stirred up controversy. The signers were members of the Hamilton Anti-Slavery Society, a group affiliated with the Boston abolitionist editor William Lloyd Garrison's American Anti-Slavery Society. The 58 Hamilton students who signed the petition constituted more than 60 percent of the student body. Their strongly worded petition angered New York state legislators who threatened to withhold a large sum of money that they had recently appropriated to support the college. The controversial petition triggered a crackdown on abolitionist activities by students enrolled at the college. The president of the college wrote to the legislature reassuring them that the students had "acted without reflection." This petition is an important example, because it shows how abolitionism was emerging during the 1830s as a powerful moral cause among Northern religious and educational groups.

Information source:

https://www.hamilton.edu/news/story/student-abolitionists-altman-desole



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 2, Document 5

States of America. distinction of rights or privileges by reason of complexion, and that you will refuse to admit any additional Vour manner sanction or sustain slavery, or which authorize a representation for slaves, or which make any full constitutional power towards the abolition of all provisions of the Constitution and laws, which in any The petition of the undersigned citizens of Pennsylvania, respectfully asks that you will exert To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United slave-holding state into the American Union.



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 2, Document 5

Document Information:

Petition from Pennsylvanians to Reject Slavery, 1844 NAID 1633886

Description:

This petition was created in 1844, a Presidential election year in which territorial expansion was a hotly debated issue. The Democrats, led by candidate James K. Polk, advocated annexing the independent republic of Texas, adding a vast slaveholding territory to America's Southwest. The Whigs, led by candidate Henry Clay, tried to avoid taking a definitive position on Texas annexation. Congress received a great number of petitions on both sides of the territorial issue throughout 1844. This Pennsylvania petition was one of many calling on Congress to ban the admission of any slave territory to the United States. Its stipulation that Congress not grant representation to slave holders most likely refers to the possibility that Texas could be admitted directly to the Union as a state, bypassing the territorial stage. The dispute over slavery in the territories would grow as an issue and contribute to the outbreak of the Civil War.



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 2, Document 6

respectfully Territories of For the Establishment and Protection of Freedom in the Territories of the United States. ave-trade may be expressly prohibited by act of Congress in all the NAMES. decitizens and electors of the State , in the county of TO THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES: 100 NAMES. The under pray that Slavery and J the United States. residing in A



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 2, Document 6

Document Information:

Petition for the Establishment and Protection of Freedom in the Territories of the United States, April 4, 1850. NAID 26306048

Description:

This petition was created at a time when Congress was debating the future of the vast Western territory acquired from Mexico under the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Three months earlier, Senator Henry Clay had proposed a series of resolutions aimed at achieving a compromise between the interests of the slave and free states over slavery in the West. Other contributors to the debate, notably Stephen A. Douglass, a Senator from Illinois, argued that the residents of the territories should decide the issue for themselves—a concept known as Popular Sovereignty. This petition advocates for an opposite policy, known as the Free-Soil position. Free Soil advocates called upon Congress to exercise its authority over lands not yet organized as states by banning slavery from them. The position advanced in this petition would make all the West, beyond Texas free and end slavery in the District of Columbia.



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 3, Document 7

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress met
The Subscribers, Cuizens of William April 1999 and 1999 and 1999 and 1999 and 1999 That they believe in right and justice that Texas is ours, having purchased it from France, it being a part and parcel of the Louisiana purchase made by Mr.
Jefferson in 1803, and being actually and absolutely in our possession for 16 years until 1819, when we ceded it without the consent of her citizens to Spain, fience it has virtually been ours since. Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Madison, Mr. Monroe, and Mr. Adams all contended that Texas was as clearly included in the Louisiana pur- chase as New Orleans, and the French Commissioner, Mr. Lausatt when delivering Louisiana to us amounced the Rib Del Norte as the true boundary on the west- The Spanish authorities ordered the delivery of all the posts west of the Mississippi, and east of the Rio Del Norte to the United States.
In the 3rd Article of the Treaty we made a solemn pledge to France and the people of Texas to protect them, (the people of Texas) in the free enjoyment of their liberty, property, and religion. And now after Texas having made a patriotic struggle successfully for Independence, and being acknowledged as such by the great powers of the world, and
her people being citizens of this great Republic, flesh of our flesh, and hone of our bone, and the great unanimity of her people in wishing to become a member of this Union, we are bound as patriots, as lovers of our free institution, to throw the mantle of our Constitution over and around and embrace her as a member of our great and glorious Confederacy.
Therefore we respectfully ask that your Honourable body may ratify the treaty for Re-annexation of Texns laid before the Senate by the President of the Uni- ted States, and if in case of it not being ratified by the Senate, then we respectfully ask that Texns be received by both houses of Congress into the Union, as a Territory of the United States. And we will ever pray.



www.archives.gov/legislative/resources

Center for Legislative Archives

Station 3, Document 7

Document Information:

Petition from Citizens of Pennsylvania in Favor of the Annexation of Texas, 1844 NAID 595387

Description:

Manifest Destiny, the belief that expanding across the continent was part of God's plan for America, was a popular idea in the 1840s. The phrase inspired pioneers to set out for Oregon in covered wagons and led others to call for adding Mexico's northern provinces, including Texas and California, to the United States. After winning its freedom from Mexico, Texas was an independent republic. The new republic's cotton-based economy was like those of the Southern states. Not surprisingly, Southerners and expansionists welcomed Texas annexation. Abolitionists and people seeking to ban the expansion of slavery in the West opposed annexation, however. The debate over Texas annexation was national in scale and became the focus of the 1844 Presidential election. This petition, from that election year, sketches the longer history of U.S. claims to Texas to justify annexation. It argues that Texas was included in the Louisiana territory purchased from France in 1803 and wrongly handed over to Mexico in the Adams Onís Treaty of 1819. The petitioners argue that the U.S. should "re-annex" Texas.



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 3, Document 8

To the Secrete of the Mited State, of the under signed citizen of Hardenick & State of Vermont soloning postert afainst the anny alim of Tipas by heats in any other mode method the consult of all the states, as inpurious to them rights un constitutional and interests and dangernes to the peace the Merion, and perpetients Blip A e Joseph 60 Tillrook Final Philbro trale nee

Transcript:

The undersigned citizens of Hardwick & State of Vermont solemnly protest against the annexation of Texas by treaty or in any other mode without the consent of all the states, as unconstitutional — injurious to their rights and interests and dangerous to the peace and prosperity of the Union.



www.archives.gov/legislative/resources

Center for Legislative Archives

Station 3, Document 8

Document Information:

Petition from Citizens of Vermont Against Annexation of Texas, April 1844.

NAID 595416

Description:

This petition from Vermont was sent to Congress in 1844, when the debate over Texas annexation dominated the Presidential election. The petition raises a novel constitutional argument: that adding Texas to the Union would require the agreement of all the other states. The petitioners argue that adding Texas threatened the peace and prosperity of the Union. While the petition does not explain the reasoning behind its claim, it was most likely based in opposition to adding a slave state. Admitting Texas as a state would tip the balance in the Senate by creating a slave-state majority. A Senate majority would give the slave interests veto power over any legislation and empower them to control decisions about the slave or free status of other areas of Western territory until a new free state was added to rebalance the sectional power. The argument in this petition underscores how powerfully the sectional division was threatening national unity on the eve of the War with Mexico.



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 3, Document 9

To the Congress of the United States_ 1847 The undersigned, entitled to vote in Trumbull county, Ohio, feeling exceedingly grieved and ashamed that such a war should be waged or sustained, by this republic, as the one against Mexico, do entreat of all members of Congress, without regard to party, to use all the influence you may possess to have said war cease, as soon as possible, without the loss of further blood and treasure and national honor; and, if you please, we should be glad to have Mexico receive reparation and indemnity for such losses occasioned by us as are not irreparable. Henry WH aley R 121 Helf Tecan M. Sutliff ro Curtis m Brinton

Transcript:

The undersigned, entitled to vote in Trumbull County, Ohio, feeling exceedingly grieved and ashamed that such a war should be waged or sustained, by this republic, as the one against Mexico, do entreat of all members of Congress, without regard to party, to use all the influence you may possess to have said war cease, as soon as possible, without the loss of further blood and treasure and national honor; and if you please, we should be glad to have Mexico receive reparation and indemnity for such losses occasioned by us as are not irreparable.



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 3, Document 9

Document Information:

Peace Petition to Congress from the Inhabitants of Trumbull County, Ohio, 1847 NAID 595303

Description:

The U.S. war with Mexico (1846–48) was popular in the South but very unpopular in the North. Antiwar protests were expressed in literature (such as Henry David Thoreau's essay, "Civil Disobedience"), in congressional resolutions (such as Rep. Abraham Lincoln's "Spot Resolution"), and in many petitions from individuals and groups across the Northern states. The argument in this Ohio petition was based on Congress's constitutional war power and its authority to make decisions on funding government operations. Although Congress had already declared war, the petition urged the House of Representatives to stop the flow of "treasure" needed to pay for the fighting. A declaration of war is a resolution passed by a majority in both Houses of Congress to commit the nation's full store of resources to fight. The declaration could be passed as a partisan measure by one party if it had a majority in both chambers. This petition urged Members of Congress to rise above partisan divisions and stop the war as an action in the best interest of the nation.



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 4, Document 10

" Jef. , respectfully Your petitioners will not dwell upon the rights of six thousand fellow men, whom the laws of the United States, retain in abject servitude, or the physical, moral, and political evils which spring But, in addition to these reasons for the interference of Congress, the daily sent for sale, from the neighbouring States, and there sold again to supply the markets of the represents-That they consider the toleration of Slavery in the District of Columbia, as incon-Domestic Slave Trade, of which this District is the seat, is an enormous abuse which calls loudly The District of Columbia is a great market to which human flesh and blood are almost more remote South. Your petitioners need not call to your recollection, the cruelties which accom-Public and private prisons Besides this, the permission pany this traffic, the fetters which bind the Slaves, the whips with which they are driven, the aucof this traffic often leads to the enslaving of free men, who are sometimes kidnapped by violence, The laws in relation to people of colour, which have been passed by the city of Washington Reepresentatives suffered by Congress, are inhuman and disgraceful to a civilized community tions at which they are sold. These are sights often before your eyes. add a ch in the Districtare crowded with the wretched subjects of this trade. Honourable Senate and House of States, in Congress assemblea and sometimes sold under the laws which Congress permits. THE petition of the undersigned, citizens of sistent with justice, humanity, and Christianity. arey directly from Slavery. Wonted for redress. toa nm 2º and



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 4, Document 10

Document Information:

Ladies of Massachusetts Petition Regarding Slavery in the District of Columbia, 1835 NAID 12059544

Description:

Women emerged as organized groups using petitions to lobby legislators in the early 1830s. The first two causes they rallied around were opposing Indian removal and seeking the abolition of slavery. This petition's vivid imagery directs the eyes of Congress to the existence of slavery in the District of Columbia and to the city's markets, where slaves were auctioned to buyers from the cotton-growing states. Slavery was moving south and west in the 1830s, from the Chesapeake region states of Maryland and Virginia that bordered on the District, to Gulf of Mexico and Mississippi Delta regions of Alabama and Mississippi. Slave owners who lived near the District of Columbia cashed in on the economic shift by selling their enslaved labor in the District's markets. The Constitution gave Congress the exclusive power to rule over the District of Columbia and, thus, the power to end slavery and slave sales there by legislation. Similar congressional authority over slavery elsewhere was less clear, and petitions singled out the District of Columbia as a place where congressional abolition could succeed. Petitions to end slavery in Washington were an important aspect of the tide of public opinion that distinguished the 1830s as an era of grassroots politics.



Center for Legislative Archives

Station 4, Document 11

chusetts, have learned with astonishment and alarm, that your honorable body did, on the in the Commonwealth of Massa-They 20 Jnited further regard it as an assumption of authority, at once dangerous and destructive to the They papers, touching the abolition of slavery, or the buying, selling, or trans, the United States, shall be load on the table, without rending, or verse States-of the right of the people of the United States to petition-and of the right of therefore present this their solemn and earnest remonstrance against said resolution, and re-Soverhunted To the Monorable the Mouse of Representatives of the United States. fundamental principles of republican government, to the rights of minorities, to the eighty of the People, and TO THE UNION OF THESE UNITED STATES: their Representatives to freedom of speech as members of your honorable body :' he Your memorialists ' consider this resolution a violation of the Constitution of ated 21st of December last, adopt a resolution in the words following, to wit: spectfully ask your honorable body to IMMEDIATELY RESCIND IT ist no putter action whatever chall be ha is dela beer El: 1 oronn Port Port of and that no further action whatever * Resolved, That all memorials, petitions, and I fer of slaves in any State. territory, or district of alonega The undersigned errel, 9 th 10-10-00-00 2e 3



www.archives.gov/legislative/resources

Center for Legislative Archives

Station 4, Document 11

Document Information:

Petition from Women of Brookline, Massachusetts, Praying that the Gag Rule be Rescinded, 2/14/1838. National Archives Identifier: 306638

Description:

This petition from a group of women in Brookline, Massachusetts (a town adjacent to Boston) bears the names of two sisters who were prominent advocates for women's rights, Sarah and Angelina Grimke. Angelina Grimke was the wife of Theodore Dwight Weld, a Boston minister who was one of the era's leaders in the abolitionist cause. The petition shows how women spoke out against the Gag Rule. This rule was first adopted by the House of Representatives in 1835. It ordered that all abolitionist petitions be tabled without being read, and that no action be taken on them. The Brookline petitioners denounced the Gag Rule as a violation of their constitutional right to petition. The text of the petition left a blank space for each group of signers to identify their locale, suggesting that copies of the petition's text were printed in a newspaper or magazine. The printed text of the petition is attached to a sheet of lined paper by wax seals. This suggests that the printed text was cut and pasted onto the sheet bearing the signatures. While there is no evidence of the particular source of the printed text, it was sent to Congress during a decade that saw the emergence of abolitionist publications such as William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator*, which was printed in nearby Boston and widely circulated.



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Slavery, and to withdraw the protection American Slave Trade. and to suppress Slavery effectually in those sections over which Congress has competent jurisdic-Believing that they are solemnly bound to "remember those that are in bonds, as bound with them," and believing that in this AGE OF LIGHT, while the great principles of LIBERTY are animating the nations, that the government of these United States-this "Model Republic"-should use all its constitutional power to eradicate, within its own bounds, an evil which is being repudiated by the civilized world as its direst curse-they are constrained respectfully and earnestly to pray your honorable body at once to devise such measures as may come legitimately within their provor woman's "sacred honor," but a half of their sex, with their husbands, sons, and brothers, are the doomed victims of a system that dwarfs the intel-America, whose names are hereunto subscribed, constrained by To the Honorable the Senate of the United States and House of Representatives: the claims of a million and countenance hitherto afforded by your Government and Flag to the who are afforded no legal protection for the heart's dearest ties, Ba nce, both to prevent the farther extension of American and debases the entire being. 0 he love of humanity, address you in behalf of And your petitioners will ever pray Your petitioners, women of ect, degrades the morals, tion. and



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Document Information:

Anti-Slavery Petition from Women of America, February 27, 1849. NAID 7741397

Description:

This 1849 petition points out the particularly tragic plight of enslaved women. Created by women, it hints at the parallel between free and enslaved women. The early Victorian era (beginning in the 1830s and named for Queen Victoria of the United Kingdom, who ruled from 1837 to 1901) was a time in which women were urged to confine their interests and ambitions to the home where they should work for the welfare of their husbands and children. Enslaved women, by contrast, had no way to protect what the petitioners called their "sacred honor" or to protect their families from exploitation or the auction block. The language of the petition also invoked the popular idea that America had a special destiny to be better than the other nations of the world. How, the women challenged, could America fulfill its destiny when it was blighted by the moral outrage of slavery? At a time when the attention of Congress was focused on resolving the question of the slave or free status of territory gained from Mexico, the women asked their representatives to resist the expansion of slavery, end the sale of slaves that was tearing families apart, and ban slavery from the District of Columbia and the unorganized territories in the West over which it had jurisdiction.

